



Access Advisory Committee to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

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Wednesday, November 16, 2011

AACT Meeting Minutes

NOTABLES

- On newer MBTA low-floor buses, vehicle numbers are provided in raised numbering and in Braille for customers with visual impairments. The raised numbering/Braille vehicle number is located on the passenger side of the bus on top of the box in the corner nearest the operator. Vehicle numbers are also provided on the "Catch the Bus" application for customers who have an iPhone or Android mobile device.
- Comments and questions concerning AACT should be directed to Chairman Philip Beaulieu by contacting the AACT Coordinator, Ms. Janie Guion, at 617-973-7507 (voice); 617-973-7089 (TTY); 617-973-8855 (fax); or at AACT@ctps.org (e-mail).
- Chairman Beaulieu recommends that members needing service information or wanting to inquire about MBTA services do so through the MBTA Marketing and Communications Department at 617-222-3200 or 800-392-6100, TTY 617-222-5146, Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 8:00 PM and Sat/Sun from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, or the MBTA website at www.mbta.com/customer_support/feedback/
- AACT has a page on the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's website at www.bostonmpo.org, click on AACT. Links can be found there for the following items: agendas, upcoming meetings, past meeting minutes, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the

MBTA and AACT, and the AACT bylaws, the AACT brochure, and ADA regulations. There are also links to the MPO's newsletter, TRANSREPORT, the MBTA's Office for Transportation Access, and the AACT Coordinator.

- The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meetings are conducted in accessible locations, and materials can be provided in accessible formats and in languages other than English. If you would like accessibility or language accommodation, please contact the MPO at (617) 973-7100 (voice), (617) 973-8855 (fax), (617) 973-7089 (TTY), or publicinformation@bostonmpo.org (e-mail).
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- Please sign in at all meetings.
- Announcements are always welcome. Please be prepared to give as many details as possible: date, time, location, contact person, and phone number. A written notice would be appreciated.

ATTENDANCE

Members

James White, Beverly Rock, Tammy Perrault, Cynthia Shaughnessy, Angela Manerson, Don Summerfield, Ian Perrault, Mary Ann Murray, Ellen Frith, K. Ryan, Reggie Clark, John Cappuccio, Tyler Terrasi, Mary Dennesen

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)/ Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

Walter Bennett and Janie Guion

MassDOT - MBTA Representatives

Frank Oglesby, Mike Hulak, Carol Joyce-Harrington, Kathy Cox, Larry Haile, Mike Festa, Phil Balcom, Michael Lambert

Vendor Representatives

John Tuttle – Veterans Transportation, LLC

Ray Croteau – Greater Lynn Senior Services

Victor Herrera – The Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN Transportation, LLC

Other Representatives

Rick Morin - Bay State Council for the Blind

MEETING

James White, in the absence of Chairman Philip Beaulieu called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM

Members, friends and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of the AACT Meeting Minutes

The September 2011 meeting minutes were approved with one opposed.

M. Murray expressed concern that questions given at previous meetings are never reported on at the following meeting. She has asked that answers be submitted in writing and forwarded to the AACT Coordinator, Janie Guion, a week before the next meeting for distribution.

Chairman's report by Jim White

He reported the following:

- He would be conducting the meeting
- Chairman Beaulieu participated in the November 5th re-opening of the Science Park Station

He then asked for questions.

Mike Callahan, Transportation Planner, representing the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) (see attached)

Mr. Callahan of the MPO gave the members of AACT an overview of the basics of the MPO, its functions, public participation procedures, and the importance of participation and discussed the role of AACT on the Regional Transportation Advisory Council

- The MPO is a body that allocates federal funds for highway and transit construction, projects and for planning
- The MPO's were created about fifty years ago and are established by federal law. Boston Region MPO began in 1974
- The federal law requires an MPO in urban areas with more than 50,000 people

- In the United States there are 385 MPO's; in Massachusetts there are ten
- He showed a map of the Boston Region MPO area (see the attached)
- The MPO planning is a 3-C process
 - Continuing
 - Cooperative--involving public outreach
 - Comprehensive
- The five MPO core functions that are required are:
 - Establish a setting for fair and effective regional decision-making
 - Identify and evaluate alternative transportation improvement options
 - Develop a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This is a document prepared each year by the MPO that lists studies to be conducted in the region with federal transportation funding
 - Develop and maintain a long range transportation plan (LRTP) –The LRTP takes a long-view look at the region's transportation needs. It also establishes goals for the transportation system, policies that will achieve those goals, and identifies major infrastructure projects costing more than \$10 million
 - Develop a short-range transportation program of the improvements. This document is known as the TIP and it has a four-year horizon. The MBTA has its own Capital Improvement Plan, a five-year plan, which details transit infrastructure needs. The MPO draws its transit projects from the MBTA plan

He then asked for questions.

M. Murray asked that the acronym TIP be explained.

M. Callahan: The Transportation Improvement Program is a four-year program of transportation, mostly capital improvements. The MPO does not fund transit operations.

Vice-Chairman White asked Mr. Callahan to explain how studies may or may not affect capital projects.

M. Callahan: Federal funds that come to the region are for capital improvements, design and planning. The Central Transportation Planning Staff conducts studies every year for the MPO with federal funds. Projects can be found in the UPWP by logging on to the MPO website www.Bostonmpo.org/upwp. This document lists every study in the region that is being conducted with federal funds. A project doesn't have to be subject to a planning study to receive federal funds, but oftentimes a planning study is the first step to the eventual funding of a project.

M. Murray asked what the MPO is doing to reduce carbon footprints.

M. Callahan: When the MPO developed its LRTP they established policies to ensure that they would move toward their goals. One goal is to reduce greenhouse emissions and reduce vehicle miles traveled. We evaluate emissions from planning improvements, including carbon dioxide, using a travel demand model.

Vice-Chairman White asked if there is a formula that will give smaller carbon footprints from the effects of increased ridership.

M. Callahan: We have not calculated that; we do calculate and report on emissions from the transportation program.

R. Morin wanted to know the total amount of funds that are applied for. What is the process for getting more funds?

M. Callahan: Funds come down to the state via a formula. Getting more funds will require a new surface transportation bill.

R. Clark asked if there were any plans to extend the commuter rail lines.

M. Callahan: There are several long-range projects: the Green Line Extension, improvements to Fairmont Line; Orange Line-Assembly Square project and a new water dock. The Long Range Transportation Plan is available at www.Bostonmpo.org.

Vice-Chairman White asked about the new jobs bill the President is trying to pass that target highway and transportation projects.

M. Callahan: I am not prepared to comment on that.

Vice-Chairman White thanked Mr. Callahan, for agreeing to speak with AACT on such short notice.

Larry Haile, Coordinator for the MBTA System-Wide Accessibility Department (SWA) will now be the new representative at AACT meetings (see attached)

Mr. Haile presented the SWA report and is submitting his written report with some additional news:

He reported the following:

- Harvard Station will be getting a new elevator
- There will be replacement bus service on the Fitchburg Line.
For further details log on to www.MBTA.com, click the Accessibility link, and click on System-Wide Accessibility

He then asked for questions.

R. Clark asked if he could get this information in accessible format.

L. Haile: Yes.

Vice-Chairman White asked if veteran operators were exempt from the bus recertification classes.

K. Cox: Every operator attends an eight hour training course. New hires go through the training in their ten week training period. The

Recertification Training Class II is shorter and also attended by all operators.

D. Summerfield shared his concern regarding operators who have attended training but do not pull into the curb.

K. Cox: We ask that you file complaints with the MBTA's Marketing and Communication Department at 617-222-3200.

M. Murray asked how many times an operator can be a repeat offender before being disciplined.

K. Cox: It would only take the first infraction to return to training classes.

R. Morin asked whether complaints were increasing or are they going down? Are consumers encouraged to file complaints to voice their concerns?

K. Cox: Complaints had gone down a great deal after the Boston for the Center Independent Living Settlement of April 6, 2006 agreement with the MBTA. Complaints are on the rise again. We have always encouraged people to file complaints at 617-222-3200.

Vice-Chairman White thanked Mr. Haile for his report.

Frank Oglesby, MBTA Deputy Director of Paratransit Operations – The Office of Transportation Access (OTA), THE RIDE (reports attached)

Mr. Oglesby distributed his October and November activity and THE RIDE reports.

He reported the following:

- Staff conducted a mini-passenger assistance training session with MBTA volunteer staff, working with Executive Order 530 Commission Listening Session
- The “increase ridership” record was broken twice in October

- OTA staff attended Marketing and Automated Fare Collection mock-up demonstration at 10 Park Plaza
- THE RIDE In-Person Assessment Team continues to work on the draft for Request for Proposals (RFP).

He then asked for questions.

D. Summerfield expressed concern over the lack of courtesy with vendor reservation representatives.

J. Tuttle: We have a high volume of reservation calls--in excess of 2,500 calls daily. There will be mistakes made. There is on-going training and we have meetings to discuss issues, whether internal or external.

R. Morin asked if AACT could be of service in the drafting for the eligibility vendor with the Request for Proposal (RFP). He also was interested in who was on the committee.

F. Oglesby/M. Lambert: The crafting of this document is an internal process; members are from OTA and the MBTA senior level executives. This document is a special procurement and must come from a legal view.

E. Frith expressed concern that Veterans Transportation drivers are still illegally parking in the handicap spaces.

F. Oglesby/M. Hulak: Please speak with the management of Veterans Transportation.

M. Dennesen expressed her concern that she was stranded at North Station and unable to reach the dispatch at Greater Lynn Senior Services for 90 minutes, even with the assistance of Transit Police and the commuter rail representative.

Vice-Chairman White: Someone will speak with you after the meeting.

Vice-Chairman White thanked Mr. Oglesby for his report.

Open Discussion:

E. Frith feels that she is not being taken seriously.

Chairman White: Do you have any recommendations?

E. Frith stated the following:

- She would like a copy of the Internal Access Monitoring form for Bus Tester using Wheeled Mobility Device,
- She would like to hear the concerns of others;
- She is concerned whether the bus stops at 10 Park Plaza will be updated by Jan 2012;
- She is happy that a new staff person in SWA will bring new ideas;
- She would like AACT to work as a team;
- She is not feeling part of a team;
- She wants the MBTA website more accessible for multiple formats for reporting complaints;
- She thinks that the reporting complaints to the Marketing and Communications Department by phone is too long;
- She would like to submit complaints to be entered in the AACT minutes in the interest of time

Chairman White: Thank you.

A. Manerson expressed concerns that operators drive by stops without stopping.

D. Summerfield agrees that waiting to speak with someone in the MBTA's Marketing and Communication Department for eight minutes is far too long. Another issue was reporting a blocked bus stop in Belmont which took two years to resolve.

Vice-Chairman White: I regularly attend the MBTA's operator training Recertification and Recertification II Programs. All operators are instructed to report blocked bus stops by entering them in the Transit Master Data box. At the end of each month a report is

generated to track the troubled areas. Operators do a better job now of reporting blocked bus stops. Ms. Cox, can you get us a generated copy of this log?

K. Cox: Yes.

C. Shaughnessy asked about Dottie Winn's replacement as the Eligibility Coordinator for THE RIDE.

F. Oglesby: Ms. Winn transferred to the MBTA's Human Resources Department as a Policy Administrator. There were three people in charge of eligibility. The department is well staffed and a replacement for Ms. Winn is forthcoming.

A. Manerson was concerned that the stop announcements are difficult to hear on commuter rail trains because the volume is low.

L. Haile: We are aware of this issue. Please phone in these types of issues to the Marketing and Communication Department at 617-222-3200. If we don't know it is happening, we can't make changes.

C. Shaughnessy says that on a recent trip on the commuter rail no stop announcements were made.

L. Haile: Please report these issues to Marketing and Communication so they are documented.

M. Murray asked whether all vendor telephone systems had gone down on November 13.

R. Croteau: I will do research.

Vice-Chairman White asked for a copy of the completed draft of the In-House Eligibility papers.

F. Oglesby: Yes, we will get you a copy.

E. Frith wants to know if THE RIDE drivers are instructed during training not to park in bus stops or the city accessible handicap parking areas.

J. Tuttle: Yes. It is a part of training.

Vendor Announcements

Representatives from Veterans Transportation, LLC, the Joint Venture of Thompson Transit and YCN Transportation, and the Greater Lynn Senior Services reported that they will all be having passenger assistance training at the end of November and during December.

Vice-Chairman White asked both MBTA and vendor representatives to forward their reports for December 2011 to the AACT Coordinator, Janie Guion, for distribution to the membership since there would be no December meeting.

Old Business: None was presented.

New Business: None was presented.

Vice-Chairman White thanked everyone for their participation and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 P.M.